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# Nova partners with UniSA to secure 'future talent pipeline'

## BUSINESS

Nova Systems has partnered with the UniSA in a bid to grow the Adelaide-based company's "future talent pipeline" as it looks to hit \$1 billion in annual revenue in the coming years.



UniSA Vice Chancellor David Lloyd and Nova Group CEO Jim McDowell have signed an MoU agreeing to collaborate on research and graduate opportunities for the next five years. Image: InDaily.

The Adelaide defence company signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the educational institution last week, in a commitment to working closely together over the next five years.

Chief executive Jim McDowell said while Nova Group – the parent company of the Adelaide-based defence systems engineering firm – had maintained long-standing relationships with a number of educational institutions across its 20-year history, the MoU signalled the first organisational level agreement between Nova Systems and a university.

He said the decision would aid the business' five-year plan to ramp-up its more than 700-person workforce by another 500 to 600 employees across the globe, with a “significant” increase in Adelaide to help drive the state's naval shipbuilding activities.

“The big determinant of the success of any business is its people and the intellectual power that it brings,” McDowell said.

“At Nova, we've been trying to move up that intellectual ladder from being just a pure professional services business to being one that generates more valuable intellectual property – and in order to do that we need more access to people.

“Why do you rob a bank? Because that's where all of the money is. Why do you sign an MoU with a university? Because that's where the talented people are.”

His appointment followed the resignation of former CEO Greg Hume, which coincided with a major review of the company's long-term strategic plan examining growth opportunities.

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McDowell said as part of its growth “aspirations” the group would look to increase its annual revenue to around \$1 billion, up from an estimated \$250 million in the 2020-21 financial year, over a “number of years”.

He said Nova and UniSA's partnership would enable to company to stay “at the forefront of technological development and grow the future talent pipeline”.

McDowell, a former University of South Australia Chancellor, said while Nova's graduate program had predominantly taken engineering students previously, it would expand its reach to include accounting, law and cyber students.

“The defence, space and emerging technology industries are critical to South Australia's economy and the collaboration supports sharing industry and research knowledge, as well as benefiting students who will be the future workforce,” he said.

UniSA Vice-Chancellor Professor David Lloyd said the MoU would help expose students to industry and produce “modern professionals”.

“This is about actually just partnering for the success of our students, being able to offer a program with a great employer,” he said.

“The defence industry is a critical part of the South Australian economy – it's essential that, as a university, we work closely with industry to educate a local, high-tech defence workforce for the future.

“This partnership will provide a great opportunity for our students to gain industry experience, for the defence industry to benefit from our world-class defence research, and for our academics to

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